

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 INR-10 L-03 NEA-10

NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 USIA-12 TRSE-00 MBFR-03

SAJ-01 SS-15 NSC-10 MC-02 ACDA-19 EB-11 COME-00 RSR-01

IO-13 /148 W

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R 111545Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1639

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

USMISSION NATO

CINCUSAFE

USNMR SHAPE

USCINCEUR

32ND TFS CAMP NEW AMSTERDAM

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MASS, NL

SUBJECT: DUTCH CUSTOMS SEIZE SURPLUS US AMMUNITION

1. SUMMARY: ON JULY 7 DUTCH CUSTOMS STOPPED TRUCK CARRYING 11,000 ROUNDS OF 20MM AMMUNITION DECLARED SURPLUS BY 32ND TFS AT SOESTERBERG. DUTCH AUTHORITIES CLAIMED TRUCK WAS IMPROPERLY MARKED AND PROPER SAFETY PRECAUTIONS FOR CARGO TRANSPORT HAD NOT BEEN OBSERVED. SEIZURE OF AMMUNITION HAS CAUSED PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS AND ARTICLES IN PRESS WHICH REGISTER CONCERN ON: (A) DANGER TO CIVILLIAN POPULATION OF LETHAL CARGO BEING IMPROPERLY TRANSPORTED, AND (B) CARGO'S ULTIMATE DESTINATION. END SUMMARY.

2. ON SATURDAY, JULY 7, BELGIAN TRUCK DRIVER WAS STOPPED AT THE WERNHOUT BORDER CROSSING ON THE BREDA-ANTWERP HIGHWAY. DRIVER WAS TRANSPORTING 11,000 ROUNDS OF 20 MM AMMUNITION DECLARED  
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UNUSABLE BY 32ND TFS AT SOESTERBERG. CUSTOMS STATED TRUCK WAS

NEITHER ADEQUATELY MARKED NOR SEALED. CONSEQUENTLY, SHIPMENT WAS IMPOUNDED. POPULAR CONSERVATIVE TELEGRAAF PUBLISHED STORY JULY 10 UNDER HEADLINE "RIDDLES AROUND MOVING BOMB." TELEGRAAF ARTICLE INDICATED THAT CHECK WITH SOESTERBERG REVEALED AMMUNITION HAD BEEN PURCHASED BY FRENCHMAN NAMED CAURLIOT, REPRESENTATIVE OF FIRM REGISTERED IN PARIS. SOESTERBERG INFORMED TELEGRAAF REPORTER THAT TRANSACTION HAD BEEN HANDLED BY US DEFENSE PROPERTY DISPOSAL OFFICE IN MAINZ, GERMANY. TELEGRAAF CLAIMED IT CONTACTED PROPERTY DISPOSAL OFFICE BUT NO ONE SEEMED TO BE AWARE OF THE SALE. WHILE FOCUSING ON DANGER TO CIVILIAN POPULATION INVOLVED IN TRANSPORT OF AMMUNITION UNDER ANY BUT MOST STRINGENT SAFETY PRECAUTIONS, TELEGRAAF ALSO SPECULATED ON ULTIMATE DESTINATION OF AMMUNITION. IT QUOTED LT. COL. DE JONG OF DEFENSE INFORMATION OFFICE, WHO SAID, "IT ALWAYS REMAINS POSSIBLE THAT THIS AMMUNITION, WHICH IS SUITABLE FOR MANY AIRCRAFT, WILL FALL INTO THE HANDS OF FOREIGN GUERRILLAS. THERE IS NO GOOD CONTROL ON IT."

3. JULY 11 LEFT WING VOLKSKRANT PICKED UP STORY BUT INDICATED THERE NO RPT NO EVIDENCE WHATSOEVER SUCH AMMUNITION DESTINED FOR GUERRILLA GROUPS. VOLKSKRANT REPORTS STRESSED DANGER INVOLVED TO CIVILIAN POPULATION THROUGH IMPROPER TRANSPORTATION OF AMMUNITION.

4. ON JULY 10, SAME DAY AS TELEGRAAF ARTICLE APPEARED, TWO RADICAL PARLIAMENTARIANS (FLOOR LEADER DE GAAY FORTMAN AND DEFENSE SPECIALIST WALTMANS) SUBMITTED WRITTEN QUESTIONS TO MINISTER OF DEFENSE VREDELING. THE RADICALS WANTED:

- (A) TO KNOW WHETHER THE SEIZURE OF THE MUNITIONS FROM CAMP NEW AMSTERDAM TOOK PLACE AT THE BORDER AS REPORTED,
- (B) EXPLANATION OF REASONS FOR SEIZURE,
- (C) INFORMATION ON PREVIOUS CASES OF AMMUNITION TRANSPORT AND PROTECTIVE MEASURES TAKEN,
- (D) TO KNOW WHETHER THE MINISTER WOULD EXPRESS HIS SERIOUS CONCERN TO APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES IF NECESSARY PROTECTIVE MEASURES HAD NOT BEEN TAKEN,
- (E) WHAT FIRM HAD PURCHASED THE AMMUNITION AND WHAT WAS ITS DESTINATION,
- (F) WHETHER THE MINISTER WAS READY TO PREVENT FUTURE TRANSFERS OF AMMUNITION OR, IF THIS WAS NOT POSSIBLE, TO ENSURE THAT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FUTURE TRANSPORT TOOK PLACE IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROPER SAFETY PRECAUTIONS.

5. DAO DISCUSSED INCIDENT WITH AUTHORITIES AT SOESTERBERG JULY 10. AMMUNITION WHICH 32ND TFS HAD DECLARED UNUSABLE HAD BEEN SOLD BY DEFENSE PROPERTY DISPOSAL OFFICE IN MAINZ-KASTEEL TO FRENCH BUYER IN DECEMBER 1972. AS FAR AS WAS ABLE TO BE DETERMINED, APPROPRIATE REGULATIONS CONCERNING SECURITY AND END USE WERE

FOLLOWED. AN AMERICAN NCO IS WITH THE BUYER NOW TO ENSURE THE AMMUNITION IS DEMILITARIZED. SOESTERBERG STORED THE AMMUNITION UNTIL THE BUYER COULD PICK IT UP. THE TRUCK DISPATCHED BY THE BUYER ARRIVED AT SOESTERBERG ON JULY 5. IT WAS NOT ADEQUATELY MARKED AND CARGO WAS NOT SEALED BUT WAS BUYER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO TRANSPORT THE SHIPMENT AND COMPLY WITH REGULATIONS CONCERNING MOVEMENT OF THIS TYPE CARGO. DAO LEARNED JULY 11 AMMUNITION HAS BEEN RETURNED TO SOESTERBERG (CAMP NEW AMSTERDAM) AND IS UNDER STORAGE THERE. SOESTERBERG IS IN CONTACT WITH DEFENSE PROPERTY DISPOSAL OFFICE TO DETERMINE DISPOSITION. DRIVER OF VEHICLE APPARENTLY DEPARTED SOESTERBERG BEFORE COMPLETING CUSTOMS CHECK THERE AND WITHOUT HAVING SHIPMENT PROPERLY SEALED.

6. COMMENT: SO FAR STORY HAS RECEIVED ONLY MODERATE PLAY IN DUTCH PRESS. RADICAL MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, WHO HAVE BEEN MOST CONSISTENT OPPONENTS OF US PRESENCE AT SOESTERBERG, COULD OBVIOUSLY NOT RESIST OPPORTUNITY TO CAPITALIZE ON THIS LATEST INCIDENT. RADICALS ARE PROPONENTS OF ASSISTANCE TO LIBERATION MOVEMENTS AND WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE CONCERNED IF AMMUNITION WERE DE  
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